



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

January 25, 2006

News Release

TWO ELASHI BROTHERS FROM INFOCOM SENTENCED

Three other Elashi brothers still awaiting sentencing

DALLAS — Two of the five Elashi brothers who operated InfoCom Corp. and were convicted in 2004 of export violations to Syria and Libya were sentenced here today, announced U.S. Attorney Richard B. Roper, Northern District of Texas. This case was investigated by: U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), U.S. Department of Commerce; the FBI; the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation; and the U.S. Secret Service.

Hazim Elashi and his brother, Ihsan “Sammy” Elashi, were sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Sam A. Lindsay. Hazim Elashi was sentenced to 66 months imprisonment and will be deported after serving his sentence. Ihsan Elashi was sentenced to 72 months imprisonment which is to run consecutive to the 48-month sentence he is presently serving.

These two defendants, along with their three brothers, Bayan Elashi, Ghassan Elashi and Basman Elashi, operated a family-run company based in Richardson, Texas. The company sold computers and Internet services mostly to customers in the Middle East. Following a four week trial, each brother, along with their company, Infocom Corp., was convicted in July 2004 by a Dallas federal jury of conspiracy to violate the Export Administration Regulations and the Libyan Sanctions Regulations. Each of the brothers was also found guilty of conspiracy to file false Shipper’s Export Declaration forms. A sentencing date has not yet been set for the other brothers or the corporation.

“This complex and lengthy investigation, and today’s sentencing, are the result of the thorough coordination among five federal agencies,” said John Chakwin, special agent-in-charge of the ICE Dallas office. “These significant sentences should send a chill down the spine of those who intend to violate U.S. export laws.” Chakwin heads the ICE Office of Investigations, which includes north Texas and the State of Oklahoma.

At Infocom, Bayan Elashi was the chief executive officer; Ghassan Elashi was the vice-president of marketing; Basman Elashi was the logistics and credit manager; Hazim Elashi was the manager of personal computer systems; and Ihsan Elashyi was a systems consultant and sales representative. All the defendants, with the exception of Ghassan Elashi, were found guilty of Libyan Export Violations and all of the defendants were found guilty of Syrian Export Violations. All of the brothers were convicted of false statements and all of the defendants except Ihsan Elashi were also convicted on money-laundering charges.

Bayan, Basman, and Hazim Elashi have been in federal custody on immigration violations since their arrest in December 2002. Ihsan Elashyi is currently serving a four-year federal prison sentence after pleading guilty in late 2002 to other charges.

From 1997 to 2000, the brothers conspired to illegally ship, and did ship, computer goods to Libya and Syria, in violation of U.S. laws which restrict or prohibit the export of technology, goods or software to countries listed as state sponsors of terrorism as designated by the Secretary of State in order to protect the national security of the United States. According to the evidence presented at trial, the defendants shipped goods to Syria without the required export licenses. The defendants shipped computer equipment to Malta and Italy, well knowing that the equipment was headed to customers in Libya. U.S. law prohibited the shipment of anything to Libya.

Hazim and Ihsan were convicted in the first of two trials on charges outlined in an indictment that also charged the defendants sent money to defendant Mousa Abu Marzook, an investor in Infocom and a self-admitted leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, aka Hamas. In 1995, the Department of Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, designated Hamas as a Specially Designated Terrorist Organization, making it illegal for any United States person or entity to conduct any business with Hamas or its representatives. Nadia Marzook, also a defendant in that case, is Mousa Abu Marzook's wife and is the Elashi brothers' cousin. That second trial was held in April 2005 and Bayan Elashi, Ghassan Elashi, Basman Elashi, and Infocom Corp. were each convicted of conspiracy to deal in the property of a Specially Designated Terrorist and conspiracy to commit money laundering. In addition, Bayan Elashi and Ghassan Elashi were each convicted on 10 counts of dealing in the property of a Specially Designated Terrorist and nine counts of money laundering. Basman Elashi was also convicted on one count of dealing in the property of a Specially Designated Terrorist.

U.S. Attorney Roper praised the collaborative investigative efforts of: the U.S. Department of Commerce; the FBI; the Internal Revenue Service - Criminal Investigation; U.S. Secret Service; and the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). U.S. Attorney Roper also thanked the U.S. Marshals Service and the Federal Protective Service for their excellent work in providing security throughout the trials.

The case was prosecuted by First Assistant U.S. Attorney James T. Jacks, Assistant U.S. Attorney Nathan Garrett, Trial Attorney Barry Jonas of the Department of Justice Counterterrorism Section, and Trial Attorney Martha Rubio from the Department of Justice.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.